

SIPRI SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING

Solna, 24 March 2020

MINUTES

Participants

Sibylle Bauer, Stephanie Blenckner, Luc van de Goor, Maria Kaemmerle, Sigrún Rawet, Dan Smith

Helena Berger (present for item 3),

Nikos Politis, Frederic Daudon (present for item 6)

Note-taker Elena Haapaniemi

The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

1. MoM approval

- The minutes from the SMT meeting on March 17 were approved.

2. Matters arising

- Maria circulated among the SMT the list of all current projects. The SMT will discuss the challenges of their implementation at the meeting next week.
- Sigrún, Magda and Maria discussed the options for acquiring Skype for Business, primarily in order to facilitate our contacts with the MFA. Discussion continues.
- A relevant Covid-19 reference has been added to save-the-date for the SSC. Dan sent the save-the-date to the Board members.
- Dan drafted a detailed letter to the Board in consultation with Jan. It will be sent to the Board later during the afternoon. It includes both Covid-19 related measures at SIPRI level and an update on our activities during January-March 2020.
- The SIPRI Lecture is on hold for the time being. Sigrún is in contact with Madeleine Albright's team. If it is not possible to have the lecture at the Concert Hall in May, it will be postponed rather than held virtually. The SMT agreed not to sign the venue contract for now.
- The formal appointment of Ambassador Lamamra as our Board member is delayed due to obvious other priorities and workload at the moment.

3. Corona virus

- Helena informed the SMT that she is finalising consultancy contracts for our four new RAs (two in the MENA programme that is taking shape and two in emerging technologies).
- Helena is also following all changes and developments relating to Sweden's health regulations and will keep all staff duly updated.
- The SMT members agreed that the virtual morning check-ins work well. The general impression is that interaction within and between the teams has increased which is positive. The climate team is continuing to have morning coffee meetings but now online. The outreach team faces a challenge due to reduced staff capacity and because comms work requires live interaction. The finance team needs to be creative so as to adapt to the new reality. Maria suggested introducing regular meetings in smaller groups so as to keep internal communication alive as much as possible.

- The SMT agreed that those staff members who would benefit from it may approach their line manager to discuss moving their screen and/or office chair to their home so they can work better. This should be discussed and decided on a case-by-case basis. If a staff member moves any office equipment home, she/he needs to inform Christina who will be the depository for this information.

4. Report back

- Sigrun updated the SMT on the status of the MFA grant report expressing her gratitude for the editorial work and to all those who contributed to drafting the document. Sigrún will share the final version with the SMT.
- Sigrún has also put together SIPRI's suggestions, as requested by the MFA, on Sweden's forthcoming chairmanship in the OSCE
- Maria informed the SMT that the launch of the new financial system will be postponed due to the current situation. Maria and Ulla will have a meeting on Thursday with the system providers to discuss a new implementation date.
- Luc informed the SMT that the Sahel West-Africa team is working on the SIDA related work focussing on the audit that is under way. Maria is assisting in the process which needs to be finalised before the end of March.

5. Staffing and projects

- Luc provided a brief update on the impact of Covid-19 on work in his cluster. Discussions with some of the donors have begun.
- Sibylle added that she is convening all programme directors in her cluster for a meeting on Thursday March 26 to discuss how to manage ongoing projects in the light of Covid-19.
- Luc flagged the necessity to start active preparations for the SSC – in case the ambition remains to organise the conference in November. Luc also pointed out that with the Forum becoming virtual, the SSC format might provide a window of opportunity for hosting some of the Forum sessions or for using speakers that otherwise would have been in Stockholm for the Forum.
- SMT approved the proposed partnership with the Nigerian Centre for Democracy and Development, the CDD.
- Application deadlines for the Deputy Director and for four positions in EP2022 have passed. Shortlisting of candidates for these positions and for the Senior Researcher on food security is under way.
- The detail of our recruitment procedures needs adjusting for the Covid-19 reality.

6. Benchmarks and indicators

- Nikos and Fred presented to the SMT the methodology and a practical tool to measure the level of implementation of the new SIPRI strategy that they have developed, based on relevant literature but first and foremost on their previous professional experience. The tool and the methodology will be presented and explained during meetings with all clusters.
- Nikos guided the SMT through both documents explaining the rationale behind them. Key messages are as follows:
 - It is not an assessment but a common point of reference for the whole institute in order to activate the resources to achieve set goals.
 - The indicators do not reinvent the strategy.
 - In many cases, the indicators can be quite simple – goal achieved vs goal not achieved.

- The strategy is a living document. Thus the indicators might need to be adapted as we move ahead.
- Establishing a baseline for each objective is essential to enable assessment of the achieved results.
- The tool will be slightly modified by Nikos and Fred following a number of suggestions by the SMT.
- Next steps include work in the clusters to identify indicators. Fred and Nikos are available to assist in this process. The SMT will then review the first draft that should be finalised in time before the Governing Board meeting in May. The results will be presented to the Board and discussed with the Board members.
- The SMT expressed its gratitude to Fred and Nikos for the great effort invested in this very useful job.

7. Forum – new format & equipment etc

- Sigrún is chairing the discussion with the MFA, partners and internally on the best way forward for the Forum in terms of content, timing and technical solutions. She highlighted Martina's, Jago's and the teams excellent work in developing alternative possibilities for the Forum.
- The plan is to keep May 13 as an Open Day, with additional events before and after. One of the topics for the May 13 panel could be Covid-19 and international cooperation.
- It is also proposed that SIPRI convene consultations to help move forward current process such as the Peacebuilding Architecture Review and the discussions of the World Bank's new fragility strategy.
- Furthermore, partners will be offered the opportunity to lead webinars. It is the partner that should be the lead and take responsibility for the whole process.
- The SMT agreed that in order to be successful, webinars need to be organised so they are clearly part of the Forum and not just another series of webinars.
- A major communication effort is a prerequisite for making the virtual Forum work.
- Sigrún and Maria are working with Magda to identify optimal technical solutions for a virtual Forum.

8. OSCE thinking & Covid-19

- Sigrún noted that one of SIPRI's suggestions for Sweden's forthcoming OSCE Chairing focussed on Covid-19's potential knock-on effects on human security and international stability in Europe, especially in areas such as Ukraine and parts of the South Caucasus. She invited the DoSes to encourage program directors to look into this window of opportunity.

9. AOB

- NTR.

Action Points

- SSC, way forward – the SMT

Items carried forward

- Governing Board agenda
- Project implementation status and contingency plans